

PHILADELPHIA HOME DEFENSE COMMITTEE

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June 23, 1917

STATEMENT BY

THOMAS B. SMITH, MAYOR

REGARDING THE PURPOSES OF THE PHILADELPHIA HOME DEFENSE RESERVE

My attention has been called to reports stating in substance that when the National Guard, now engaged in guarding railroad bridges and munition plants is detached from that duty and sent to mobilization camps, they will be replaced by members of the Philadelphia Home Defense Reserve. Such reports are absolutely without foundation.

No change in the purposes for which the Philadelphia Home Defense Reserve was formed has been contemplated, either by myself or Director Wilson, of the Department of Public Safety, who is in direct command of the Philadelphia Home Defense Reserve. The organization was created to serve in case of an emergency which might threaten the lives and property of the citizens of Philadelphia and their families, requiring the presence of a large part of the uniformed police force in a particular section of the city.

Under such conditions the members of the Philadelphia Home Defense Reserve would patrol the beats temporarily vacated by the uniformed policemen, and render such service as the exigency might demand. No attention should be paid by the citizens of Philadelphia or the members of the Home Defense Reserve to rumors of changes in the purposes or plan of organization. All information concerning the duties and training of the Philadelphia Home Defense Reserve will be issued officially through the Department of Public Safety, of which department the Home Defense Reserve is an auxiliary.

Thomas B. Smith